

Compilation and analysis of *Escherichia coli* promoter DNA sequences

Diane K.Hawley and William R.McClure*

Department of Biological Sciences, Carnegie-Mellon University, 4400 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh,
PA 15213, USA

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ABSTRACT

The DNA sequence of 168 promoter regions (-50 to +10) for *Escherichia coli* RNA polymerase were compiled. The complete listing was divided into two groups depending upon whether or not the promoter had been defined by genetic (promoter mutations) or biochemical (5' end determination) criteria. A consensus promoter sequence based on homologies among 112 well-defined promoters was determined that was in substantial agreement with previous compilations. In addition, we have tabulated 98 promoter mutations. Nearly all of the altered base pairs in the mutants conform to the following general rule: down-mutations decrease homology and up-mutations increase homology to the consensus sequence.

INTRODUCTION

Promoters for *Escherichia coli* RNA polymerase have been shown to contain two regions of conserved DNA sequence, located about 10 and 35 base pairs upstream of the transcription startsite (75,107,112,204). Although promoters are expected to share common structural features reflecting a similar interaction with RNA polymerase, comparison of promoter sequences has also revealed considerable sequence diversity. This diversity is related both to the wide range of initiation frequencies and to the partial overlap of binding sites for transcriptional control proteins. In this paper, we have analyzed the sequence homologies among 112 well-defined promoters. We have also tabulated the locations of 98 promoter mutations. This information supports the importance to promoter function of the conserved sequence elements proposed by Rosenberg and Court (205) and Siebenlist et al. (206).

BACTERIAL	PROMOTERS	TGACA	TATAAT	+1	TATAAT	+1	TATAAT	+1	TATAAT	+1	TATAAT	+1
araBAD	TTAGCGGATTCCTACCTGACGCCTTT GCAAATTAATCAATATGGAACTRTCT		TATCGCAACTCTRACTGTTCCTCCATACCCGGTTTTT GCCGTTGATTATAGACACMTTGTGTTACCGTTTTTG	1,2	3	4	2,4	5	6	7	5	4
araC	CTAATTATTCGCACTTCACCTTTGACCTTTCT		TTCGCACTTTGTTATGCTGATGGTAT GTTATPACATAG	5	6	7	5	6	6	5	6	7
galP1	CACTAAATTATTAATGTCACACTT		TTCGCACTTTGTTATGCTGATGGTAT GTTATPACATAG	5	6	7	5	6	6	5	6	7
galP2	TAGGCACCCCAGGGCTTACATTTA		GGCACCCCCAGGCTTACATTTA TTCGCACTTTGTTATGCTGATGGTAT	8	9	9	8	9	9	8	9	9
lacP1	TTAATGTCAGTTAGCTCACTTAA		TTGCGGTTATGGCATGATAGC GCCCAGAAGAGAT	11	12	12	11	12	12	11	12	11
lacP2	GACCAATGAAATGCGAACAACTT		TGCCCCATTAAAGAAACTTAA TCCATGACGGATGTCAG	13	14	14	13	14	14	13	14	14
lacI	AGGGCAAGGAGGATGGAAAGGT		AGGTTTCTGGCCGACATTTA TCTGACTGTAATAATGTTAG	15	16	16	15	16	16	15	16	16
malEFG	CAGGGGGATGGGAGGATTAAAGCCATC		TCTCGTCTGTGTTAGATAATCT TCGGGAGATGATGTTAGAATCT	17	18	18	17	18	18	17	18	18
malK	AAAAACCTCATCGCTTCAGAA		TCTGAAATTAGCGTTGTTACAA TGGGACCTCGTTACTGATGCCAC	20	21	21	19	20	21	19	20	21
malt	AAACAATTCAAGAAATGACAAAC		TATTTTTGTTATGTTAGCT ACACGTTGTTACAGGTAAA	22	23	22	21	22	22	21	22	21
tnaA	CAGAAACGTTTATTCGGAACATCGA		ACCGGAAGAAAACCTGACATTAA ATTAATTAATGTTCTGTTCTAA	24	24	24	23	24	24	23	24	24
deoP1	AATTGGTGTGTTATGGAAAGTTG		ATGTTAAACCCTCATGTTGTTACAA TTTGTGTTACGTTACTCTAA	25	26	26	24	25	26	24	25	26
trp	TCTGAAATTAGCGTTGTTACAA TGGGACCTCGTTACTGATGCCAC		ACAAAACCTTATGGTAACTCTTT CTGGTAACTGTTACATATGCGA	27	28	28	26	27	28	26	27	28
trpR	GTACTAGGAAACTGTCATPAGCT		AGGATTTCTCCGTT CTGGTAACTGTTACATATGCGA	29	30	30	28	29	30	28	29	30
aroH	ACCGGAAGAAAACCTGACATTAA ATTAATTAATGTTCTGTTCTAA		ACACGTTGTTACAGGTAAA CGTGAANGCTTGTGTTAGTAA	31	32	33	30	31	32	30	31	32
trpP2	GTGACATCGT		CTGGAATTACCTTACATATGCGA CACTAAATTACCTTACATATGCGA	34	34	34	32	33	34	32	33	34
his	GGCCAAAAAAATATCTGTTACATT TTGTTTTCTGTTACATT		CACTAAATTACCTTACATATGCGA TGTTAATTCTGGTGTAGACTTT	35	35	35	33	34	35	33	34	35
hisA	AAATTAAATTTTATGTTACATT GCCTTCCTCAAACCTGTTTGTG		ATTGGAAGATTTAGCTTACAA TTACCGTTACGTTAGATGTC	36	37	36	35	36	37	35	36	37
leu	TTGTCATATCGACCTTAAACCA CATCCCTCGACAGTCAGGACGGT		AAGTACCGTACGAGTAAATTG TTTTTTATCCGTTACGTTAATTG	38	39	40	37	38	39	37	38	39
ilvGEDA	TCCAGTATAATTGTCGACATT TCGAAATTATTATGTTGTTACATT		AACCATTGTTATGAGTTAG TGAGCATACGTTACGTTAATTG	40	40	40	38	40	40	38	40	40
argCBH	ACAGTTATCCACTATCTGTTGAT TTCTCTACAAACACTGTTACGTTA		CCTTTTGCTGTTACGTTACCTCA ATTGCTGTCGTTACGTTACCTCA	41	42	41	39	40	41	39	40	41
thr	TTGTCATATCGACCTTAAACCA CATCCCTCGACAGTCAGGACGGT		AAAACATTGTTACGTTACCTCA TTTTTTATCCGTTACGTTAATTG	43	44	43	41	42	43	41	42	43
bioA	TCAGGAAATTATTGTTGTTACATT GCCTTCCTCAAACCTGTTTGTG		AGCTGTTGTTACGTTACGTTA AGCTGTTGTTACGTTACGTTA	45	45	45	43	44	45	43	44	45
bioB	TTGTCATATCGACCTTAAACCA CATCCCTCGACAGTCAGGACGGT		AGCTGTTGTTACGTTACGTTA AGCTGTTGTTACGTTACGTTA	46	47	47	45	46	47	45	46	47
fol	TCCAGTATAATTGTCGACATT TCGAAATTATTATGTTGTTACATT		AGCTGTTGTTACGTTACGTTA AGCTGTTGTTACGTTACGTTA	48	49	49	46	48	49	46	48	49
uvrB P1	ACAGTTATCCACTATCTGTTGAT TTCTCTACAAACACTGTTACGTTA		ATAAACCCCTCATCTGATGCC AAACAAAAGAGTAAGTTAG	49	49	49	47	49	49	47	49	49
uvrB P2	TTGTCATATCGACCTTAAACCA CATCCCTCGACAGTCAGGACGGT		GCCTTTTGCTGTTACGTTACCTCA AGCGTATCGCCCATG	50	51	51	48	50	51	48	50	51
recA	TTGTCATATCGACCTTAAACCA CATCCCTCGACAGTCAGGACGGT		AGTCAAGAAACCTCTATCTGCG CGCCGAAGCTGAC	52	53	53	50	52	53	50	52	53
IexA	TTGTCATATCGACCTTAAACCA CATCCCTCGACAGTCAGGACGGT		CAGCTGTTGTTACGTTACCTCA CCCTGTTGTTACGTTACCTCA	53	54	54	51	53	54	51	53	54
ampC	CCATCAAAAAAATTCCTCAACATA CAAGGTAGCAATGTTACCTTA		CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA CCGGTTTACGTTACCTCA	54	55	55	52	54	55	52	54	55
ipp	CAAGGTAGCAATGTTACCTTA GATCGCACTGTTACGTTACCTTA		CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA CCGGTTTACGTTACCTCA	55	55	55	53	55	55	53	55	55
hisJ (S.t.)	CTGTTGTTACGTTACCTTA CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA		CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA CCGGTTTACGTTACCTCA	56	57	57	54	56	57	54	56	57
Bori-r	TTGTCATATCGACCTTAAACCA CATCCCTCGACAGTCAGGACGGT		CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA CCGGTTTACGTTACCTCA	58	59	59	56	58	59	56	58	59
Bori-l	TTGTCATATCGACCTTAAACCA CATCCCTCGACAGTCAGGACGGT		CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA CCGGTTTACGTTACCTCA	60	61	61	58	60	61	58	60	61
Spot 42 RNA	ATTACAAAAGAGTCGTTGAAACTG ATGCGCAACGGGGTGTGACAGGC		CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA CCGGTTTACGTTACCTCA	62	63	63	60	62	63	60	62	63
M1 RNA	AAACGATTAACACTTACCTTA CTACGGCCAGGCTATCGATCTGCG		CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA CCGGTTTACGTTACCTCA	64	65	65	62	64	65	62	64	65
alas	TTAAAAAACCTAACAGTGTGCGTCT TAACTACAGTGTGCGTCT		CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA CCGGTTTACGTTACCTCA	66	67	67	64	66	67	64	66	67
trps	TTAAAAAACCTAACAGTGTGCGTCT TAACTACAGTGTGCGTCT		CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA CCGGTTTACGTTACCTCA	68	69	69	66	68	69	66	68	69
q1ns	TTAAAAAACCTAACAGTGTGCGTCT TAACTACAGTGTGCGTCT		CCGGCTGTTTACGTTACCTCA CCGGTTTACGTTACCTCA	70	71	71	68	70	71	68	70	71

		PROMOTERS		
tuf		TATGAAATTTTTGTAGTGAACCT	CGGATGTCCTAGATGCG	56
tyrT		TCAACGTAACACTTTAAGGGC	CGGTACTTGATGCG	57
leuI tRNA		TGATAATTAACTATGAGAAA	CCCGCTTCGGAT	59
supB-E		CCTGAAAAGAGGTGACGCTGC	CGAAAAACCTAGATGCG	60
rRNA P1		TTCATTAATTCCTCTTGTAGGCCG	AGGCTCTATAGCTG	60
rRNA P1		TTCATTAATTCCTCTTGTAGGCCG	GAATACCTCCCTATAGTGCC	61
rRNA P1		GATCAAATAATCTTGCGGAA	GAATACCTCCCTATAGTGCC	61
rRNA P1		CTGCAATTCTCTATGGGCCCTGC	GAATACCTCCCTATAGTGCC	62
rRNA P1		ATGCAATTCTCTATGGGCCCTGC	GAATACCTCCCTATAGTGCC	63
rRNA P2		GCAAAATAATCTTGCGGAA	GAATACCTCCCTATAGTGCC	63
rRNA P2		AAGCAAAAGAAATGCTGACTCTGTA	GAATACCTCCCTATAGTGCC	64b
rINDEX P2		CCGAAATTAGGGTGAATATGAA	AGAGGAAGGGTAAATAGC	65
str		TCGFTGTTAAATTCTTGACACCTTT	TGGCATTCGCCCTAAATTCG	65
spc		CCGTTTATTTCTTACCAATTC	TGAAAGGCTTATATGCC	66
S10		TACPGCAAAATGCTTGGTTGCT	GGCTTAAAGGTGTTATATGCG	67
rpoA		TTCGATATACTTGAAAGTGTG	GGTGTAGCTGGCTAGATPGC	67
rplJ		TGTAAACTTAACTGCTTGTAGGGC	GTTGATTTCTACATCTT	70
rpoB		CGACTTAAATAPACTGCGAGGACG	ACCCCCAGCTATA	71
			TCGGTCTGTGAAATGCA	72
			ATGAAATGTTAA	73
T7 A1		TATCAAAAGGTATGCTTAAG	TCTAACCTATAGGATACTTC	74
T7 A2		AGGAAAACAGGTATGCAACATG	ACCCATCGAGGAGG	74
T7 A3		GTGAAACAAACGGTTGACAACATG	AAGTAAACAGGCTAGATA	74
T7 C		CATGATAAGCAACTTGACGCCAATG	AAATGCTCTAGGAAAC	75
T7 D		CTTAAAGATAGCTGGTGTAGCTTGTG	TTAAATGGGCTGATAGCTTAT	75
>PR		TAACACCCTGGCTGCTTGTACTTAT	GGCTTCTTAGGTTGAGCTTAA	75
>PRM		AAACAGCAGGTGTTAGATTTAT	ACCTCTGGGTGTACTGAG	76
>PO		TAATCTTGGCGGTGAGGATAAAAT	TGCTGTATTTGTATAGTAC	76
>PR'		TACCTTGCCCGAAAGTGTAGGTTTT	AAATAAAATGGTAAATTGAA	77
>PRE		TTAACGGCTGATATGAAATTGAA	TCAAAATGGTAAATTGAA	78
>P1		TAGAGCCCTGGCTGGTTGTTGCG	CTCAAGATGAAATGAA	80
434 PR		CGGTTTCTCTGCGGTATGTTGCG	CTTGTGAGTAACTTAA	81
434 PRM		AAGAAAACCTTATTGACAAACAA	TCTAACCTATAGGTTGAT	82
P22 PR		ACAATGTATCTGTTGCAAAATAC	ACCATCTGGTGTGAAATG	83
P22 PR		CACCTTAAATAAACTTGACCTAAAGA	CCATCTGGTGTGAAATG	84
P22 PR		AAATTATCTACTAAAGGATCTTA	AGTCTCTCTTAAAT	85
P22 ant		TCCAAGTTAGCTGTTAGATGATA	GTCAAGTTTAAATGAC	86
P22 mnt		CCACGGTGGACCTTATGAAATATA	TTAACCTATAGTTC	87
>X A		AAATACCGTCAAGGATGACACCTTC	CCATCTGGTGTGAAATG	88
>X D		TAGAGATTCTCTGGTGTGACATTTA	AAACAGCAGGTGTTAGTACTCTG	89
>X B		GCCAGTAAATAGCTGCAAAATAC	GTGGCCTTGTGAAATGATG	90
fd VIII		GATACAATTCCTCGTCTACTTCT	TTGGCGCTTGTGTTATATGCG	107-110
fd X		TCCCTTAATACCTTGTGCAATT	CGCTTGTGCTGAACTATAAGA	113-114
			CGGGTAAAGGACCT	115
				116-112

PLASMID & TRANSPOSON PROMOTERS			
BBR322 bla	TTCCTCTAAATACATTCAATATGT	ATCCGCTCATGAGACAATAAC	CCCGATAAACATTGCT
BBR tet	AGAAATTCTCATGTTGACGCTTA	TCATCGATAAGCTTAAATGCG	GTTAGTTTATCACA
BBR P1	TTICATACGGTGCTGACTCGTTAGCAATTAACTGTGATAAACCTAC	GCCTTAAAGCTTA	121
BBR RNAI	GTGCTACAGAGCTTGAAAGCTGTG	GCCTAACTACGGCTAACACTAGA	121
BBR primer	ATCAAAGGATCTCTAGATCCCTT	AGCACAAAGTATTG	121
BBR322 P4	CATCTGTCGGTTATTCAACCGCATATGGTGCACTCTCACTG	GCTTGCACAAACAAA	120
BBR322 P4	GGAAAGTCCACAGCTTGACGGAA	CITCGATGCCGGAT	118
CoIE1 P1	TTATTTTAACTTATTGTTAAAAA	TGCTGTTATATAAAA	124
CoIE1 P2	GGAAATAGGATTTTAAATGGA	TGCTGTTATATAAAA	125
RSF p1 primer	GGATATGGCTTACCTGTTGACTGTTA	AACCTGGGTAGCGT	125
RSF RNAI	TAGAGGACTTTGCTTGAACTTGTATG	GACCGATTCATACATTC	126
C10DF RNAI	ACACGGGGTTCGCTTGAACTTGTG	CACCTTAAAGCTTAACTGAA	126
R100 RNAI	CACAGAAAGAAGCTCTGAACTTTC	GCCAAAGTCCGGTACATCTG	127
R100 RNAI	ATGGGCTACATCTGAACTTTC	CGGGCATATAACTATACCTCC	128
R1 RNAII	ACTAAACTAAAGACCTTACMTGTC	CGAATGTTAAGGAA	128
R1 RNAII	GTACCGGGTTACGGGGCTGGC	GCGTAGATGCTGATGTTACT	128
Cat	ACGTGATGGCAGCTAAGAGCTTC	GCTTGTACTCCCTGATCATATG	128
Th10 Pin	TCATTAAGTAAAGGTGACATCAT	AAACAAACAGAG	128
Th10 Pout	AGTGTAAATCAGGGCAGAAATGGTA	CAACTTTCACCATATGAA	130
Th10 tetA	ATTCCTAAATTGTTGACACTCTA	ATAGATCTACPAAC	131
Th10 tetA	TATTCAATTCACTTTCTCATCAC	CTTGGAAAGAAATTC	132
Y ₆ tnpA	ACATCATPAAACATTGCACTTGT	GACGTCGACATC	133
Y ₆ tnpR	ATTCAATTCAACATTGCAACCTGT	ACTCCCTATCATG	134
Th5 IR	TCCAGGATCTGATCTTCATSTGAC	TGATAGGACTGTGTTAAATAC	134
Th5 neo	CAAGCGAACCGGAAATTGCCAGCTGG	TGTGCGATTAATTTT	135
		CGAAATTATTAATAATTTTAC	135
		CTCCCTAACATGTTAACGTTCA	136,137
		GGCGCCCTCTGGTAAGTGTGG	138
		GAAGCCCTGCAA	139
PROMOTERS CREATED BY FUSION OR MUTATION			
LacP115	TTTACACTTAACTGCTCGGTCTGT	ATGTTGTTGTTGATTGTTGAG	CGGATAACAAATT
BiOp98	TTGTTAAATTCGGGTAGACTGTTAA	ACCTTAATCTTTAAATTGCG	TTCAGAACTGCT
λ c17	GGTCAATTGTTGCAATTGCAAT	TCAATTTGTTAAATTGTTG	36
λ cin	TGATAAACATTGTTGAACTATG	CAAATTAATGCTACATCTA	90
λ L57	TTGATAAACATTGCTTTATAAT	GCGTGTGTTTAAAT	141
IS2 I-11	ATGTCCTGAAATTAG	GCCAACCTAGTAAATAG	64
		CAACCTGTTGCCAA	142
		GACTTACATTTT	143

SEQUENCE HOMOLOGIES

We have used biochemical and genetic evidence to decide whether a DNA sequence should be included in our list of promoters. The 112 promoters in Figure 1 were defined by one or both of the following criteria: (i) The 5' terminal nucleotides of the transcript have been determined, or (ii) one or more promoter mutations have been sequenced. Promoters have also been located less precisely by other techniques, including the measurement of run-off transcript lengths in vitro, S1 mapping of an RNA isolated in vivo, or detection of an RNA polymerase-DNA complex by filterbinding, protection from enzymatic digestion, or electron microscopy. All of these methods are useful for localizing a promoter to a limited region of DNA; however, the assumption that the promoter can then be more precisely located by finding the best match to a consensus sequence within such a region has proven unreliable. For this reason, those promoters for which the more stringent biochemical or genetic information is unavailable are listed separately in Figure 2. These proposed promoters have not been included in the analysis of sequence homologies.

The separation of promoter sequences into two categories is based on reasonable criteria, but we realize that making such a distinction is not without difficulties. One could argue that several of the proposed promoters in Figure 2 have, in fact, been located precisely by a combination of indirect evidence. For example, some of the fd promoters listed in Figure 2 have been characterized by filter-binding techniques, run-off

Figure 1. Promoters for *E. coli* RNA polymerase. The sense strand sequences of 112 promoters were aligned as described in the text. The consensus sequences for the -35 and -10 region hexamers are shown. The nucleotide corresponding to the major 5' end of the transcript (+1) is underlined; a dashed line indicates that the RNA was sequenced, and the 5' end occurs at one or more of the underlined bases. The numbers in the three columns at the right correspond to the references for the DNA sequence (column I), and the 5' end of the RNA synthesized in vitro (II) and in vivo (III). The promoters are grouped into four categories: bacterial, phage, plasmid and transposon promoters, and promoters created by mutation. All of the bacterial promoters are from *E. coli* K12, except for one *S. typhimurium* promoter (hisJ) that has no sequenced *E. coli* counterpart. Several *S. typhimurium* plasmid and phage promoters were also included. These have been shown to function as promoters in *E. coli*. The DNA from the filamentous phages fd, M13, and f1 have all been sequenced in their entirety. Although only the fd promoters are listed here and in Figure 2, references are given for the DNA sequences of the other two phage genomes.

	TTGACA	TATAAT	References
araFG	ACTGGAAAGTACCTTTCAGTGAAA	TAACATTACGAGGATAAT	GAATACAGAGGGCG 144, 145
malP	TAATCCCCGAGGATGAGGAAGGT	CAACATCGAGCTGGCAAAC	AGCGATAACGTTG 15
pyrBI	TATTGCATCAAATCTTCCGCCGCTT	CTGACGATGAGTATAAT	CCGGGACAAATTG 146
purF	TGGTCTGAATGGGATTGCCATCGCG	GTACTGTTTATCGTACCC	GATCGTTGGTGC 147
glyA	TCTTGTCAAGACCTTATCGCA	CAATGATTCGGTTAATCT	CTTCGGCGTGTCCA 148
glyA region	ACACCAAAGAACCATTTACATTGCA	GGGCTATTITTTATAAGAT	CCATTGAGATACAT 148
argEpl	TTACGGCTGGGGTTTATTCAGC	TCAACGTTGAGTATT	TATTCTATAAAATCTG 34
argEp2	CCCGCATCATTTCCGGTGAAGA	CAGTCAAACGGGTTATG	CATACTGGGATGGG 34
argF	ATTGTGAAATGGGGTCCAAATGAA	TAATTACACATATAAAGT	GAATTTAATTCAT 149, 150
argI	TTTATGCTTTGAGCTTCAAAATGAA	TAATTCATCCTATATAAAT	GAATTTAATTCATT 149
aroG	AGTGTAAACCCGGTTACACATT	TGACGGAAAGTATAGAT	CGAAAGTATTCATTC 151
ilvB	CTTTGCTGAAAAATTTCATTGTC	TCCCCGTAAAGCTGTCT	TGTATAAAATTGTT 152
asnA	ATGCGGATTTGATGATTCAATTATT	TTAGCCTTTTCTTAAAT	GAATCAAAGTGA 153
ompA	TATGCTCTGACGGAGTTCAACTTGT	AACTTTCAACTACCTT	CTPAGACTTACATCG 154-156
ompB	TTTCGCCAATAAATTTGATACCTA	AGCTGCTTTAATAT	CCTTGTGAACAATT 157
argT	ACATCAGGACAAATTGCAACGTT	TATTAAACAAATTAAAGT	CGAATGTTTGTG 48
crp	AAGCGGACACCCGAGACAAACAG	CGAAAGCTATGCTAAAC	ACTCAGGATGCTACA 158
unc	TGGCTACTTATTGTTGAAATCACG	GGGGCGCACCCTATAAT	TTGACCGCTTTTGA 159
gnd	GCATGCTAAAGCTATTGATACCTTA	ATAACTGTTGTTACACT	TATTIGCGAACATTC 160
dnaA P1	ATGCGGCTAAATCGTCCGCCCTC	CGGGCAGGATGCTTACACT	TAGCGAGTTCTGGAA 161
dnaA P2	TCTGIGAGAAACAGAACATCTT	CGCAGATTAGGGTATGAT	CGCGGTGCCCCGATC 161
origin B	TTTCCACACGGTAGATCCAAAC	GGCTTCACAGCGTACAAT	ACGGCAGCTTTAATA 49
origin E	TCAAGCGCACAAAGTGAAGTAAAT	CCACCGCCGGGCTTCAAT	CCATTITTCATAACCC 49
glyT	AAAGAGAGCTTCTCGATAATTCTAG	TCAGCAATGAAATCAGT	AGCCGAGTTCCAGGA 56
hiss	TGGCTCCGAAACATTGAGGAAAGCGTTAGGGTTCATTTTATATT	CAGAAAGAGAAATAAA	162
rpsT P1	TTATCGGGAAAAGCTTATTCACA	CCCCCAGAACCTGTTAGAAT	CCTGGGCCATCCTACTA 163
rpsT P2	TTTGCACAATTCATTGACAAAGA	AGGTAAAGGGCATATT	CCTCGGCCATTGAAAT 163
rpsA	CACCACCTTAAGCATTGAGCAAGT	ATTGAAAAGCGTACAAT	ACGGCGCAGAAATT 164
rpmB-rpmG	TGTCCTGTCGGGACTTGAGCACATC	GCTGAGCTGGCTTACACT	ACGGCACCTTTGAGAA 165
rpmH P1	ATCCAGGAGCATCTTCGCCCTTAC	CCATCAGCCCGTATAAT	CCCTCAC 161
L11	CGCGCATTTAATCGTTCACAAGG	GTAGAGATGAAATCAAT	TTTGGCCCTTTGTT 72
T7 B	TTTATGATTATCACTTACTTATGA	GGGAGTAATGTTATATCT	TACTATCGTCTACT 77
T5 25	CATAAAAATTATTTGCTTTCAGG	AAAATTTTCTGTATAAT	AGATTCTATAAAATTG 166
T5 26	CTTAAAAAATTTCAGTTCCTTAAATCC	TAACATTCTGTATAAT	ATTCTCATGTTGAA 166
T5 28	AGTTAAAATTGTAATGCTTAAATGC	TTAAATTACTGTTATAAT	TTTATATATAAAATG 166
T5 207	TTTAAAAAATTCTTGTAAACGCC	TTCAAAATTCCTGTATAAT	ATACCTCTATAAAATG 166
T4 57	TGCTTGTAGATTACTCTGATAAATT	AACTCAGTTATGTTATTAT	ATCGTTCTGATAC 167
T4 45	TTTAACGTTAATGCTT	TATTAATTAGTTAAAAA	TTAAATCTCATTTG 168
fd I	AATTCTCCGCTTAATGCGCTTCCC	TGTTTTTCTTACCTTCT	TCCTGCTAAAGGCTGC 108-110
fd I'	GGCAAAATTAGGCTCTGGAAAGACG	TCGTTAGCTTGTGAAAGT	TCAGGATAATTG 108-110
fd II	ACAAAACATTAACGTTACAATT	AATATTGCTTATAACAT	CATCTGTTTGGG 108-110
fd II'	TTTGATCTTCTGCTTACATTACT	CGGGCATTCATTTAAAT	ATATGAGGTTCTAA 108-110
fd III	TTAAGAAAATTCTCGAACAGAAG	CTGATAAACCGTACATA	TAAGGCTCTTTG 108-110
fd IV	TGATAAAATTCACTATTGACTCT	CAGCGCTTAAATCTAAC	ATCGTATGTTTCA 108-110
fd IV'	TTAAAATTAACGTTGCGCAAAAG	ACGCTCTGACTGTATAAT	TGTTTGTAAATCTA 108-110
fd V	TTTAAATCTAGATTCTTCCTCCA	ATTGATTTGACAAAT	GAGCCAGTTCTTAA 108-110
fd VI	CGCTGTAAACCATATGAAATTCT	AAACTTATTCTGTTG	108-110
G4 A	GCTCCAAAATATGCTTGAATAC	TCAACTCACCACTTAAT	GCCTCCCATCAAACG 169
G4 B	GGCAAAATTATGCTTGAACACAC	GTGGCTTATGTTACTCT	ATGCCCATCGCAGTC 169
G4 D	TAAACATCAATCTTGAACATCTG	AAAGAACGTGGCTTAT	CCACATCGTCAACTG 169
Mu Pe	TACCAAAAAGCCTTACATTAAG	CTTTCTGAGTAAATTCT	TTTGTAAAGCTAGCT 170
pMB9	AATACGCTCAGATGAACTCATCG	TAGGGAAATGCTTATG	GTATTAGCTAAAGCA 171
cloacin	TCATATGACACCTGAAACCTGG	AGGGAAATGAGGTTAAT	CATACTGTGTATA 172
traT	GATATCGGTGTAATTCTATGTT	ATAGTTCAACAGTATGAT	GAGTGAATCTTAAATT 173
Tn3 tnpA	TGGACACTAAACGAAACCGCTTTA	CTATGCTGATAATTATAAT	ATTTGAAACGGT 174
Tn3 tnpR	CGGCTTCGTTGAGTGTCCATTAA	TCGTCAATTGCGATAAT	AGACACATCGTGTCT 174

Figure 2. DNA sequences of proposed promoters. The sense strand sequences of possible promoters are aligned to maximize homology to the conserved -35 and -10 region hexamers. References for the sequence and the evidence that indicates that the sequence contains a promoter are listed. For the reasons discussed in the text, the current genetic and biochemical information does not allow precise location of the promoters within the sequences.

transcription experiments, and protection experiments (108,110). Conversely, it is also possible that some of the promoters in Figure 1 that were defined biochemically *in vitro* do not function *in vivo*. Thus, the defining characteristics employed here were intended to limit the uncertainty in the alignment of promoters for determination of a consensus sequence, but are not viewed as the sole criteria of promoter function.

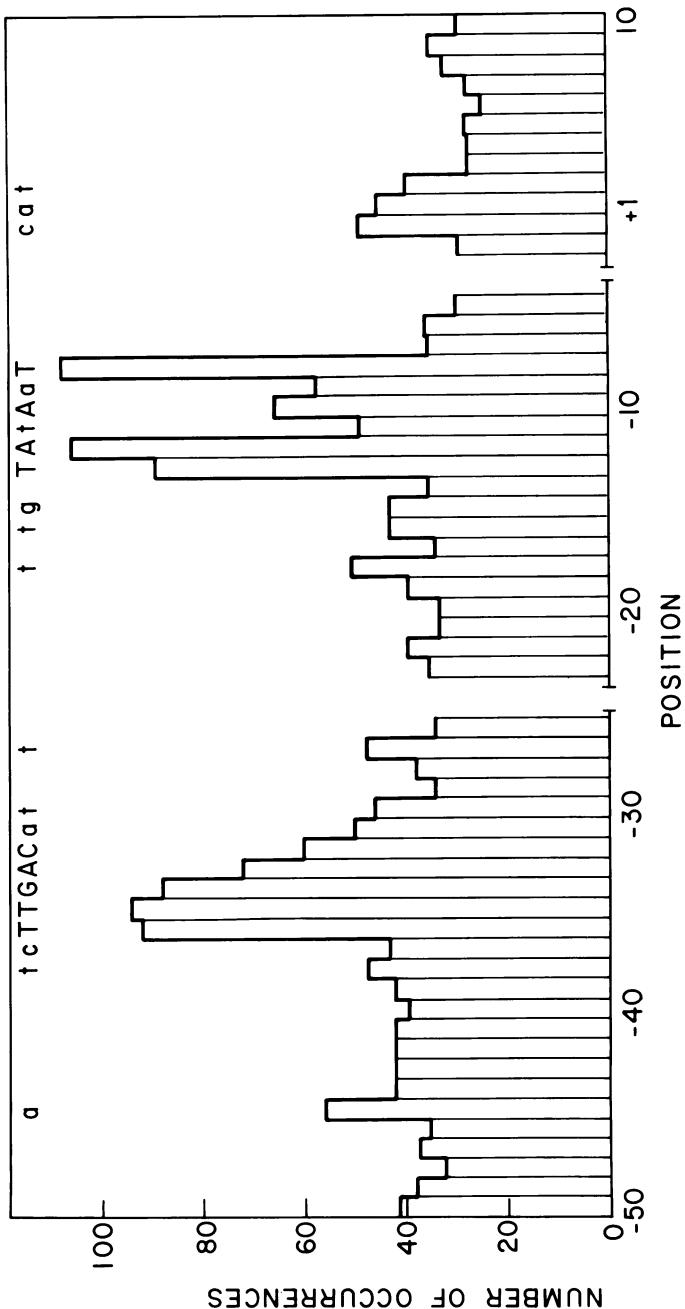
The alignment of the promoters in Figure 1 was based on several considerations. First, we tried to maximize homology to the 12 base pairs determined to be the most highly conserved among promoters previously compiled (205, 206). These bases were TTGACA around -35 and TATAAT around -10, with an allowed spacing of 15 to 21 base pairs between the two conserved sequences. When two alignments resulted in equal matches within the two hexamers, we assumed that a spacing of 17 base pairs was preferred. The optimum spacing and allowed range were selected on the basis of studies of promoters mutated by deletion or insertion between the -10 and -35 regions. Table 1 lists examples of spacer mutations. In all cases, the promoter was stronger if the spacing was closer to 17 base pairs. However, promoters with spacings of 15 and 20 base pairs were reported to retain partial function. All but 12 of the 112 promoters in Figure 1 could be aligned to maximize the homologies with spacings of 17 + 1 base pairs.

In order to align promoters with different spacings, we placed two

Table 1
Mutations that change the spacing between the -35 and -10 regions.

Promoter	Mutation	New Spacing	Phenotype	Reference
ampC	+1	17	15 X ↑	45
lacP ^S	-1	17	10 X ↑	207
lacP ^S	-2	16	≈ w.t.	207
P22 ant	-1	16	weak ↓	100
tyrT	-1	15	50 X ↓	191
lacP ⁺	+2	20	10 X ↓	208

Promoters in which insertion (+) or deletion (-) mutations have been characterized are shown. All of the phenotypes correspond to estimates of the changes in levels of expression *in vivo*, except for the lacP^S mutations, which were characterized *in vitro*.



A	28	30	37	15	56	42	42	37	42	39	18	25	26	2	6	2	72	26	50	26	34	25	26	31	20	39	33	39	23	29	16	23	19	20	16	29	66	57	1	35	23	31	20	9	45	16	24	25	28	24	24	32	35	26			
T	41	33	32	25	34	32	32	35	42	37	42	42	47	14	92	94	11	19	15	37	46	34	38	48	34	35	38	28	27	39	51	43	26	31	89	3	49	15	19	108	31	29	21	16	27	23	20	25	27	15	16	29					
C	16	11	29	19	21	18	13	21	9	19	24	26	29	29	11	6	88	3	11	17	15	21	26	21	27	23	24	27	25	22	13	29	28	43	35	11	1	18	17	14	0	33	24	30	21	8	37	5	12	27	22	17	20	24	21	16	17
G	22	27	18	29	40	14	20	12	22	23	16	25	10	43	7	6	11	18	60	8	25	23	23	17	20	34	21	24	27	12	25	20	25	20	27	10	1	26	14	22	3	13	36	30	29	49	6	25	25	13	18	22	17	16	17		

breaks in the sequences. The break between the -10 region and the transcription startsite was arbitrarily placed three base pairs downstream of the conserved -10 region hexamer. We chose the position of the break between the -10 and -35 regions by comparing the sequences of six pairs of analogous *E. coli* and *S. typhimurium* promoters. Most of the sequence differences between these highly homologous promoters occurred approximately 8 to 15 base pairs upstream of the -10 region hexamer.

The distribution of specific bases at each position is displayed in Figure 3. We have numbered the positions relative to the startsite of a "standard" promoter with spacings of 7 and 17 base pairs between the startsite and the -10 region, and the -10 and -35 regions, respectively. For purposes of discussing conserved base pairs, we have used Poisson statistics to express standard deviations from the expected random (1/4) occurrence of a base pair. We have arbitrarily chosen to define a consensus sequence consisting of strongly conserved and weakly conserved base pairs, present at frequencies greater than the expected by 6 and 3 standard deviations, respectively. These are indicated in Figure 3 by upper and lower case letters above the histogram.

Within the -35 region, the TTGAC sequence is strongly conserved. The A at -31 occurs at approximately the same frequency as four other weakly conserved bases within the -35 region: a T at position -38, a C at -37, a T at -30 and a T at -27. When the base at position -31 is not an A, a T is present at significantly greater than random frequency. Upstream of the -35 region is an 8 to 10 base pair A-T-rich region, with a conserved A at position -45.

Figure 3. The distribution of bases at each position in the promoter. The histogram displays the number of occurrences of the most prevalent base in the sense strand at each position. The number of occurrences of each base is tabulated below each column of the histogram. The positions have been numbered according to a promoter with the most frequent spacing between the regions of homology (see text). The bases that occur in at least 39% of the promoters (three standard deviations above expected random occurrence) are listed above the histogram. Bases that are greater than 54% conserved (6 standard deviations) are capitalized. Standard deviations are based on Poisson statistics. In this compilation, equal occurrence of the four bases at each site corresponds to 28 ± 5.3 . From position -2 to +10 only 88 sequences are tabulated. These correspond to promoters for which the 5' end of the RNA has been determined. In this region equal occurrence corresponds to 22 ± 4.7 .

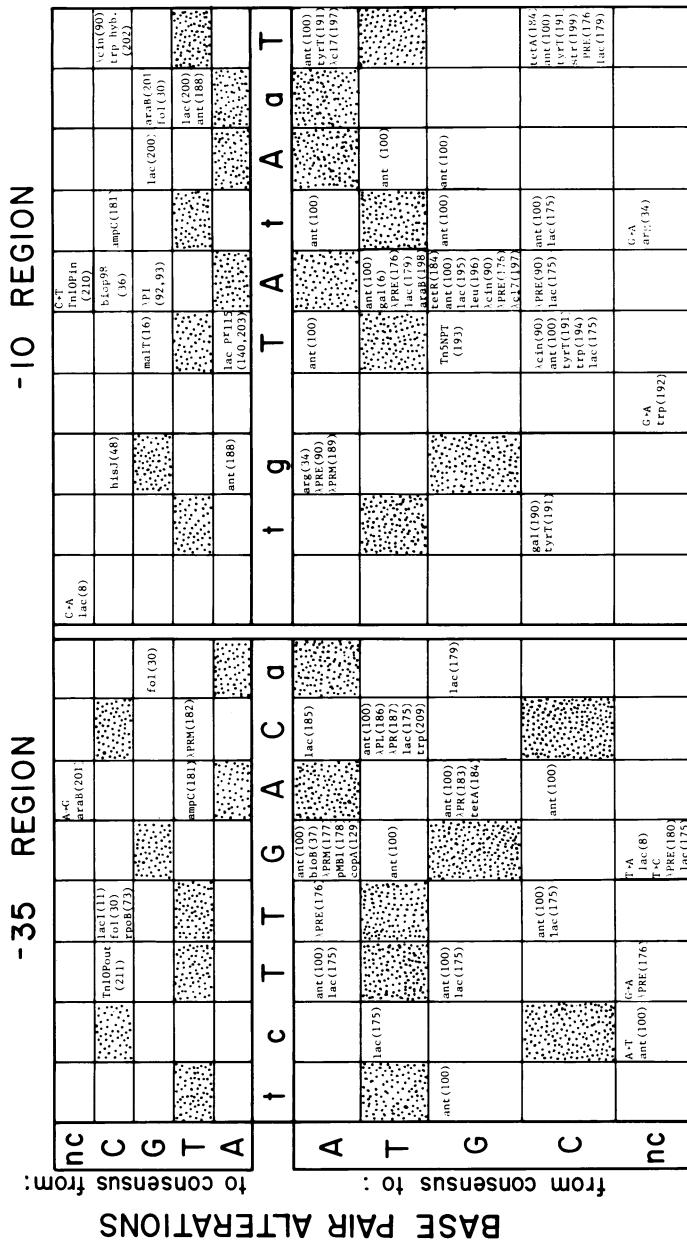


Figure 4. Location of promoter mutations. The base pair changes responsible for increasing or decreasing the initiation frequencies of promoters are shown. The consensus promoter is shown in the center of the grid. The mutations listed above this sequence are up-mutations that convert the indicated base to the consensus base. The mutations listed below are down-mutations that change the consensus base to the indicated base. Almost all of the mutations can be placed within this grid. The exceptions are the nonconsensus to nonconsensus changes (in the rows indicated "nc").

Four of the six base pairs in the -10 region hexamer are strongly conserved. The other two base pairs are weakly conserved, as are the T at -18, the T at -16, and the G at -15. The so-called "invariant T," while apparently not absolutely required for promoter function, is present in all but four of the wild-type promoters in this compilation. The A at -12 is present nearly as often; only six of the promoters do not share this homology.

Of the 112 promoters in Figure 1, only those 88 for which the 5' end of the transcript has been precisely determined were used to examine the sequence homologies around the startsite of transcription. A preference for a C at position -1 and a T at +2 was observed. No significant homologies were found downstream of +2. The spacing between the -10 region and the startsite is usually 6 or 7 base pairs, but varies between 4 and 8 nucleotides. The presence of multiple starts for some promoters indicates that the RNA polymerase is somewhat flexible in the selection of a startsite. Initiation with a purine is highly preferred. For most promoters, transcription begins with an A if one occurs within the required region, or a G if an A is not present. However, this generalization is far too simplistic because the availability of an A or a purine does not always preclude initiation with a G or a pyrimidine, respectively.

PROMOTER MUTATIONS

The location of promoter mutations strongly suggests that the most highly conserved base pairs in the promoter are the main sequence determinants of promoter strength. About 75% of all sequenced mutations occur at the positions of the strongly conserved bases in the -10 and -35 regions of the promoter (Figure 4). Nearly all of the rest are located in positions of weakly conserved base pairs. In addition, all but seven of the mutations that decrease initiation frequency also decrease the homology of the promoter to the consensus sequence, while up-mutations increase the homology in all but three cases. This generalization is most strikingly illustrated by promoters for the phage P22 antirepressor and the E. coli lactose operon, for which many different single base pair mutations have been selected and sequenced. Only two of the mutations shown in Figure 4 occur at positions not included by our definition of consensus

sequence. The importance of some of the bases that are included (e.g., the A at -45 and the bases around the startsite) has not yet been demonstrated by genetic evidence.

The only up mutation that decreases homology to the consensus sequence is the A to G transition in the -35 region of *araBAD*. There are no down mutations that increase homology to the consensus sequence. However, seven of the mutations compiled in Figure 4 correspond to nonconsensus base pairs altered to other nonconsensus base pairs. These data suggest that a hierarchy of base pair preference could exist at some positions.

The demonstration that particular base pairs are highly preferred at some positions within the promoter and that mutations at these positions damage promoter function suggests that RNA polymerase specifically interacts with functional groups on these base pairs. It is also possible that certain bases at some positions interfere with promoter function. For example, at the following positions, one particular base is present at significantly lower frequency (by 3 standard deviations) than expected for random occurrence of three bases: a G at -42, a G at -33, and a C at -31. At most positions where strong homologies are observed, the other three bases all occur at such low frequency that a disfavored base cannot be assigned with certainty.

We draw two general conclusions from the literature survey presented here. First, the genetic and biochemical criteria we have used are the least ambiguous defining characteristics for promoters. Second, the location and sequences of most promoter mutations suggest that the consensus promoter sequence corresponds to maximal function. In the future, it may be possible to locate promoters by considering DNA sequence alone. Such attempts are currently speculative because the relative contribution of each base pair to promoter function cannot be assigned on the basis of homology information and mutant data alone. We expect that the current compilations will be useful for designing experiments that will better define promoter location and the determinants of promoter function.

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*To whom correspondence should be sent

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